

THE FOUNDATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

President's Report for the Year 1990*

A. International Conferences on Environmental Future (ICEFs):— After considerable preparatory work and consultation, these started in Finland in 1971, the 'year before Stockholm', to which UN Conference on the Human Environment the first ICEF's Proceedings constituted a free input† that was referred to as 'major'. We continued the ICEFs with the second, in Reykjavik, Iceland, in 1977, and the third, in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1987, entitled 'Maintenance of The Biosphere', the latest to date being the fourth, held in Budapest, Hungary, during 22–27 April 1990, the year under review. Entitled 'Surviving With The Biosphere', it will be the last for which the undersigned Founder, Editor, and subsequently Secretary-General and Chairman of the International Steering Committee, will be primarily responsible, as he is handing over the series to Professor Sir John Burnett, Executive Secretary of the World Council for The Biosphere (see F. below), who is sharing the editing of the Proceedings of the 4th ICEF as he did those of the 3rd.

The title of the forthcoming book of Proceedings will be that of the 4th ICEF, namely *Surviving With The Biosphere*, the invited participants of which numbered some 140 of whom about three-quarters were from some 30 other countries than the host one of Hungary and represented all the six normally-inhabited continents. The occasion was also that of the 3rd Baer-Huxley Memorial Lecture, given by Dr Mostafa K. Tolba, Executive-Director of the United Nations Environment Programme. Entitled 'Building an Environmental Institutional Framework for the Future', it has already been published in the Foundation's Journal, *Environmental Conservation* (Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 105–10, 1990), and will appear with full 'Commentary' on the discussion etc. in the book of Proceedings.

B. Environmental Conservation:— The Foundation's quarterly Journal, *Environmental Conservation*, continued much as in recent years — each issue comprising 96 pages of text in the same large (27.5 x 20 cm) format with 5 regular sections in addition to the Main Papers — namely Editorial etc., Short Communications & Reports, Notes, News & Comments, Conferences & Meetings, and Reviews & Notices. This year the Conferences & Meetings section usually contained, besides reports on suitable items in chronological order, up to 5 'Important Prospects', while the Reviews & Notices section, besides book Reviews, usually contained some Notices of recently-published pertinent volumes. Again this year 384

pages were published, apart from the much-used covers, the number of major, refereed papers being 30. In all some 165 separately-headed submitted or, occasionally, requested items were published, almost all of them being expressly edited. Again a considerable proportion, especially of the main papers and short communications, were illustrated by means of photographs or original diagrams or graphs, with or without numerical or other tables. The total number of figures published was again nearly 150 and of original Tables about 80.

C. Index of Titles and Authors published in Environmental Conservation:— There is still stock of the original Index, covering the years 1974–86, and of the first Supplement, for the years 1987 and 1988, while work is in progress towards the second Supplement, which is to cover the years 1989–93. Owing to the drastic increases in Swiss postage rates in its category, we have had to increase the price of the series, as announced on p. 302 of the Winter issue of *Environmental Conservation*, to 50 Swiss francs or 35 US dollars — for the set, including Supplements and all postage, for as long as stocks last.

D. Environmental Monographs & Symposia and the supplementary Cambridge Studies in Environmental Policy:— In the former series Professor Andrew S. Goudie's *Techniques for Desert Reclamation* was published early in 1990 and, in the latter series, Professor Lynton Keith Caldwell's *Between Two Worlds: Science, the Environmental Movement, and Policy Choice*, was published later in the year. This at last inaugurates the series of 'readers' which is intended 'to present scientific analyses of major environmental issues... and so develop ideas and policies for rational management programmes.'

E. Awards:— From our publications of the preceding year, the Foundation's confidential Awards Committee again chose four winners of 'Best Paper' Prizes for which equal amounts were allotted of the total, augmented prize-money. The prizewinners were Professor Reid A. Bryson, Paul J.M. Vertegaal, Dr Richard A. Mordi, and Drs Robert M. Gray & William H. Rickard — the last two being joint Authors and hence sharing their part of the prize money. Of awards 'the other way', the President received the Hungarian Academy of Sciences' Founder (Zéchenyi) Medal and The Netherlands' Order of the Golden Ark (Officer).

F. World Council For The Biosphere:— This body held its Seventh Annual General Meeting in the Hotel Agro, Budapest, Hungary, on the morning of Saturday, 28 April 1990, following the termination of the Fourth International Conference on Environmental Future (see A. above). Full activity of the Council is being resumed with the release of its Executive Secretary, Professor Sir John Burnett, from the Acting Chairmanship of the British Nature Conservancy, through the exacting and absorbing period of its impending subdivision into 'National' bodies.

G. World Who's Who in Environment & Conservation:— This long-planned work to which the Foundation is now committed, with the probable sub-title of 'Leading

* Published following requests after the decision of the Governing Board of the Foundation, at its Sixteenth Annual General Meeting (on 8 March 1991), to update only triennially henceforth its 'Origins, Objectives, and Needs'.

† The chapters were taken successively to Mr Maurice F. Strong in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, where, as Secretary-General of the forthcoming United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, he was 'preparing for Stockholm', and it is interesting to note that micro-history repeats itself to the extent that he has asked for the chapters of the 4th ICEF Proceedings as he and his staff prepare for the major UN Conference on Environment and Development which is to be held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Specialists, Administrators, and Benefactors', will be fully activated as soon as the 4th ICEF Proceedings book is finally out of the President's hands fairly early in 1991. Compiled principally by the President's Personal Assistant but under his direction and editorship, this propitious work of reference is to contain the authorized, suitably-detailed biographies of up to about 3,000 leaders in the fields concerned, the final choice of those to be invited to participate being made or at least sanctioned by the Foundation's confidential Awards Committee. Towards this the Foundation has the active collaboration, among other bodies, of the two principal world ones, namely UNEP and IUCN, who between them have already submitted lists totalling some 1,500 suggestions — to which another 1,000 or more will probably be added from our files dating back to the beginnings of the Environmental Movement in the mid-1960s. However, to do the job as thoroughly as is planned and surely deserved, will require considerably more funding than is yet available.

H. World Clean Energy Conferences:— In the manner of our nominal (without any financial commitment) sponsorship of the International Conferences on Waste Minimization and Clean Technology (*see* our report on the first in *Environmental Conservation*, 16(4), pp. 374–5, 1989), it is hoped* that our 1991 AGM will sanction our sponsorship 'in kind', alongside the World Meteorological Organization, of this emphasis on a much-needed world movement for clean energy. Following conferences on the use of hydrogen as a vector of solar energy and on energy compatibility, the first conference under the above title is to take place in the Geneva International Conference Centre during 4–7 November 1991. The organizers who request our sponsorship are the Cercle Mondial du Consensus (CMDC), Kellerweg 38, 8055 Zürich, Switzerland, whose moving spirit and President is Engineer Gustav R. Grob.

I. Round-up Seminars:— When a major conference or congress brings together world leaders in an important field of public interest and concern in the manner of the recent Second World Climate Conference, in Geneva, it seems an excellent idea to prevail on a chosen few of those leaders to address the local public as was arranged by Mr J. David Laughton, the Conferences & Meetings officer on our Journal. So we gladly acceded to his request to co-sponsor nominally and co-chair such a seminar following the scientific part of the Second World

Climate Conference — as it is to be hoped the Foundation will approve in retrospect at its 16th AGM* and likewise for future encouragement when and where appropriate. Subsequently Mr Laughton deputized for us at the Ministerial Meetings part of the Second World Climate Conference, and earlier he had organized the successful Fourth Wright Science Colloquium on 'The Evolution and Demolition of Planet Earth', which we felt 'could well be taken as the prototype of comparable occasions elsewhere and ultimately world-wide' (*Environmental Conservation*, 17(3), pp. 281–2, illustr., 1990).

J. Vernadsky International Centre for Biosphere Studies:— Our expressed hopes that this will embrace also the Vernadsky Foundation (described in our Summer issue of 1990) seem destined for disappointment; nor did the planning meeting take place as expected during the year under review. However, we are due to spend several days in Leningrad or Moscow or nearby Pushchino early in June 1991, to deliberate collectively on the situation regarding the Centre and Foundation and plan for their future, trusting there will be no further postponement of these overdue considerations.

K. Peace with the Environment:— There being much support for this theme and our suggestion of a Nobel Peace Prize to recognize it, we started working late in 1990 on a further nomination for 1991 (deadline for receipt in Oslo, Norway, February 1st) and came out with a joint one (by Lord Shackleton and Professor Christopher D. Stone) of UNEP and its Executive Director. This was widely favoured and supported by letters etc. from prominent people whom we contacted and who mostly responded with gratifying enthusiasm.

L. Hope for The Biosphere:— This would seem most likely to accrue from the evolution of a pandominant race or cult of Mankind that would place the interests of, and actions for, the environment before all personal and selfish ones — a theme that we started developing publicly in the year of this report, and intend to go on pursuing in future.

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Hooke Park College to Encourage Small Timber-based Rural Industries

Industry has increasingly used 'new materials' made from finite resources, but timber remains the world's major renewable resource and the most energy-efficient structural material. Recognition of the multiple role of trees in the environment has never been so acute as it is today. Given that Britain has an ideal climate for growing excellent timbers, the available land, the design and technological expertise, and a great tradition for furniture and building, the essential ingredients are there for a network of small industries which make efficient use of our indigenous timber supplies and those coming on stream in the years ahead.

At present, 10% of the land in the UK (or some 2 mil-

lion hectares) is used for timber-growing. The extensive clearance of the forests in Britain over the past five centuries has led to a shift in production of wooden items from the countryside to the ports, with their ready access to foreign timber and, increasingly, to imported manufactured products. The decline of manufacturing in the countryside has so reduced the market for indigenous timber that woodlands in this country have become a liability, mainly acceptable because of increased interest in their contribution to the landscape and to Nature conservation. In order to justify the reintroduction of management that will produce high-quality timber, however, it is crucial to maximize the value of timber by processing.